

MUD LAKE SCHOOL, MUD LAKE

presents

BATS

CAST:

Narrator - Glenys Best
Mud Lake Bats - Amy Rose
Edward Winters
Robin Broomfield
Jamie Rose
Jeffrey Winters
Virginia Hope
Mud Lakers - Jodean Winters
Tracy Rose
Glenys Best
Mike Best
Jamie Rose
Jeffrey Winters
Travelling Bat - Kim Best
Butterfly Bat - Glenys Best
Mexican Bulldog Bat - Jodean Winters
Vampire Bat - Mike Best
Flying Fox - Virginia Hope

MUSIC - Ginny Ryan, Guitar
Virginia Hope
Kim Best - Recorder

COSTUMES - Virginia Hope
Kim Best
Ginny Ryan

DIRECTOR - Ginny RYAN

INTRODUCTION (Speaker in front of empty stage):

In the tiny community of Mud Lake, on the south bank of the Churchill River, Springtime brings a great surge of life. The frogs climb out of their beds of mud, geese and ducks stop in on their great trip North, woodpeckers and songbirds make the forests ring, and all the leaves turn green. And among the many creatures that wake up from their Winter's sleep is a small, strange animal - the chiroptera - better known as the little brown bat.

Bats come out on the long Spring and Summer evenings, to feed on flies and mosquitoes, and other insect life. And in Mud Lake, they're especially common at the end of a softball game. You see, the insects come out to feed on the people, but then later, when the people go home, the bats come out to feed on the insects. (Look at watch.) And if you'll wait for just a few minutes, I think you'll see what I mean. It's a warm June evening, the kids in Mud Lake are planning a game of softball - and the bats have heard the news...

(Speaker exits as, slowly, the bats tiptoe out on stage - Jeff, Robin, Virginia, Edward, Amy.)

VIRGINIA: Is it almost time?

ROBIN: I hope so. I'm getting hungry.

EDWARD: Yeah, I want some blackflies.

JEFF: Some mosquitoes would taste real good!

AMY (LOOKING AROUND): Where are those humans, anyway?

VIRGINIA: Don't worry - they'll be along any minute to play their game.

ROBIN (AS GUITAR BEGINS): And when they're through, are we ever gonna have a feed!

(Song - Mud Lake Softball Game)

THE MUD LAKE SOFTBALL GAME
(Tune: "Kelligrew's Soiree")

You may talk of autumn Mukashans,
But folks, make no mistake,
They couldn't hold a grub-bag to the
ball games at Mud Lake;
If you want a feed of mosquitoes,
And if it doesn't rain,
Come with me and we'll have a feed
at the Mud Lake Softball game.

CHORUS:
There are blackflies, blueflies,
And a scattered dragonfly,
Juicy bugs and mosquitoes,
Nothing's quite the same.
Sand flies and little fleas,
Go up your nose and make you sneeze,
But we come out to eat them all
at the Mud Lake Softball game.

AMY: Uh-oh! I hear them coming!

JEFF: We'd better fly out of here - fast!

VIRGINIA: Yeah - you know what they'll do to us if they see us!

ROBIN: O.K. - but we'll all meet back here as soon as the humans leave -
alright?

EVERYONE: Alright!

(They rush off stage. Guitar music begins as Mud Lakers come slowly onstage, wearing baseball caps. Each one has a willow, a baseball bat, etc., and is glancing suspiciously around them, looking for bats. Song: Icky Black Bats.)

ICKY BLACK BATS
(Allison Gross tune)

In this dark, dingey forest live horrible bats;

They're not scared of dogs, they're not scared of cats,
They've got very sharp teeth and faces like rats,
Horrible, icky black bats.

Icky black bats...
Icky black bats...
Who makes Mud Lakers need to wear hats?
You know it must be icky black bats.

Their eyes are small and beady,
They're crafty and mean -
They start to fly around when the leaves turn green,
If you meet them in the forest you do nothing but scream!
You know it must be icky black bats.

Icky black bats...
Icky black bats...
If you bar up the windows they come in through
the cracks -
You know it must be icky black bats.

They hang upside-down and they fly real fast,
They make a creepy, squeaky sound when they fly past,
They aim for your hair and they hang on fast,
You know it must be icky black bats.

Icky black bats...
Icky black bats...
Who makes Mud Lakers hide in their hats?
You know it must be icky black bats.

MIKE: I know one good thing about bats.

GLENYS: What's that?

MIKE: It's good fun killing them.

JAMIE: Yeah - and after they're dead you can scare people with them.

TRACY: Well, I don't like them. I think they're gross.

JODEAN: Yeah - they're black and ugly, and you can get rabies from them.

JEFF: You know, squirrels can give you rabies, too.

MIKE: Yeah, but squirrels are cute looking. Bats aren't cute. They're just plain ugly.

GLENYS: When I was little, the boys used to chase me with dead bats.

TRACY: Yeah, and they'd tell you, 'Dont't stay out 'til dark, 'cause bats will get in your hair.' Ughh!

JAMIE: They've got mean little fangs - and they look just like vampires.

JODEAN: Yeah, and vampire bats are spooky, and they drink your blood.

JEFF: But we don't have vampire bats here, do we?

MIKE: Nah, they're only in Transylvania.

JAMIE: Yeah, well, the ones around here are bad enough.

(Chanted to accompanying recorder/guitar music.)

TRACY: A bat is like a flying mouse, in a creepy haunted house.

GLENYS: They're black and furry, with very sharp fangs. They get in your hair - in your braids and your bangs.

MIKE: Bats are scary, bats are tiny. Their eyes are very black and shiny.

JEFF: They're awfully frightening! They soar like lightning!

JODEAN: Dirty, black bats! They swoop at your hats!

JAMIE: They get in your hair? Well, let them dare! (Brandishes baseball bat.)

EVERYONE CHANT: Kill 'em with a willow,
Kill 'em with your hat,
Kill 'em with the tip of your baseball bat!
Kill 'em with a broom handle,
Kill 'em with a stick,
Icky black bats - they make me sick!

(Music stops.)

MIKE: Anyway, let's forget about the old bats. Let's play our baseball game!

JEFF: Yeah, come on, everyone! It's getting dark!

JAMIE: Who's picking teams?

GLENYS: I will.

JEFF: I will, too.

MIKE: O.K. guys, Glenys and Jeff are picking. Who's got a coin?

JODEAN (REACHES IN POCKET): Here. (Hands it to Mike.)

MIKE: Heads or tails, Glenys?

GLENYS: Heads.

(Mike flips coin.)

MIKE: It's heads, Glenys. You pick first.

GLENYS: O.K. I pick...Mike.

JEFF: Jodean.

GLENYS: Tracy.

JEFF: Jamie.

MIKE: Alright, everyone. Our team's at bat, first. You go out in the field, guys.

JEFF: I'll pitch. (Gets in position, says to Jodean and Jamie) You two cover the bases. (They do.)

(Glenys is up at bat.)

MIKE: Strike one! Strike two! C'mon Glenys!

TRACY: Better walk, Glenys.

GLENYS: No way! (She hits the third ball and runs to first base. Her team cheers.)

MIKE: I'm up, next.

TRACY: Strike one. Strike two.

MIKE: Hey! Wait a minute! I can't even see the ball!

JEFF: Yeah, it's getting too dark to play ball.

GLENYS, JAMIE, JODEAN: Awww...

TRACY: It's too late now, guys. We wasted all out time talking about old bats. Anyway, (slaps her neck) the flies are starting to eat me.

JAMIE: Let's go home.

EVERYONE (SADLY): Alright.

(Just then, Amy flits by.)

GLENYS: Wait a minute! Did you see that?

OTHERS: What?

(Robin flits by.)

GLENYS: There's another one! the bats are out, guys!

JAMIE: Where? I don't see them.

(Amy flits by again.)

JODEAN (POINTING): There he is.

MIKE: C'mon, guys, let's get one.

(They all get ready with their bats and their willows; Edward rushes out. They smack him, he falls.)

MIKE: I got him.

GLENYS: EEE! I'm not looking at him.

TRACY: Yuck! I'm not going near it.

MIKE (KICKING AT IT): It's only an old bat.

JAMIE: Let's kill another one.

JODEAN: Yeah. Maybe we'll get two this time.

MIKE: Nah! Let's go home. Maybe we'll see some on the way!

(Jodean has one last look at it; they exit.)

(Robin, Virginia, Amy, Tracy, tiptoe back out.)

ROBIN: Oh no! It's Edward!

TRACY: What happened to him?

AMY: A Mud Laker killed him!

ROBIN: Why would a Mud Laker kill Edward?

VIRGINIA: Because they hate us.

TRACY: Well, why do they hate us?

AMY: We never did anything to them!

VIRGINIA: It's because they're afraid of us. They think that we bite them and get in their hair.

AMY (TO TRACY): I never bit a human - did you?

TRACY: No.

(Jeff enters.)

ROBIN (TO JEFF): Look what the Mud Lakers have done! They killed Edward!

JEFF: Poor little bat! Those humans have no right to treat us this way.

VIRGINIA (TO JEFF): Well, we'd better carry him off somewhere. It wouldn't be right to leave him here. Help me, please.

(They drag Edward off stage and return, sit down, looking very sad.)

ROBIN: I don't even feel like hunting, now.

AMY: Neither do I.

(They all sit. Jamie and Edward come onstage, together.)

JAMIE: What's the matter with you guys?

VIRGINIA: Edward got killed.

JEFF: The Mud Lakers killed him as they were leaving their softball game.

EDWARD: Gee, that's too bad. (Sits.)

JAMIE: Poor old Edward. He was my best friend. Those Mud Lakers get meaner every day. (Sits.)

ROBIN: I've got a mind to go hang upside-down.

AMY, TRACY: Me too.

JEFF: Mud Lake's not a safe place for bats anymore.

(A new, unknown bat, Kim, enters.)

KIM: Excuse me, but, is this Mud Lake?

VIRGINIA: Sure is. But who are you?

KIM: Me? Oh, I guess you'd call me a wanderer...I've been flying from place to place for a long time, now...but, say, what's going on here? Is something wrong?

JAMIE: One of our friends got killed by the humans.

KIM: Why did the humans do that?

JEFF: No special reason. He was just flying around.

TRACY: It happens all the time here.

JAMIE (AS AMY GOES AND GETS GUITAR): It's enough to give you the blues.

ED: Yeah, the brown bat blues.

VIRGINIA: Have a seat, stranger. We'll tell you all about it.

(Song: Brown Bat Blues)

BROWN BAT BLUES

It started on a warm Spring night,
I was feeling bad (2X)
I got the worst case of the brown bat blues,
I ever had.

The people are so cruel,
We can't fly anywhere (2X)
They swing an smack and hit until
They knock us right out of the air.

Can't chase mosquitoes
Can't chase the black flies
We're getting pretty sick of this
Aren't we guys?

I got the brown bat blues
And I got 'em bad,
I got the worse case of brown bat blues
I ever had.

Bats are getting killed
All over Mud Lake town (2X)
You know, sometimes I just wanna quit
And hang upside-down.

They kill us with brooms
They kill us with sticks
Sometimes it's willows and
Sometimes bricks.
I've got the brown bat blues
And I've got 'em bad.
I've got the worse cast of brown bat blues
I ever had.

KIM: Bats, bats, bats! I'm getting sick of this! Everywhere I travel, it's the same old thing: humans are afraid of bats, humans think bats are ugly - so what do they do? They kill them off like flies! And what do the bats do about it? Not a single thing! Brothers! Sisters! When are you going to wake up and realize that no one has the right to treat you this way! Bats are very sophisticated creatures, don't you know that? We're a very ancient order of the class of mammals. In fact, we're the only ones that can fly! (To the boys.) Did you ever stop to consider that?

JAMIE, ED, JEFF: Not really...

KIM: Yes, indeed! We are the noble order chiraptera - C-H-I-R-O-P-T-E-R-A, to be exact.

BATS: Oh, wow!, etc.

KIM: And what's more, we've developed our own sophisticated sonar system that the humans have been trying to copy for years!

BATS: Gee! Wowie!, etc.

KIM: And all those old things you hear humans say about bats - they're all old wives' tales. I mean, "Blind as a bat". (To Robin..) Are you blind?

ROBIN: No.

KIM (TO AMY): Are you?

AMY: No.

KIM (TO ED): What about you?

ED: I'm not blind.

KIM: Well, there you go! And further, (to all of them) have any of you ever flown into someone's hair and mussed it up?

BATS: Nah! No! Not me! No way!, etc.

KIM: Of course not! Human beings are prejudiced and misinformed. They've been giving us a bad name for hundreds and hundreds of years - and the bad things they say about us aren't even true! We are a most interesting order. And there are many more interesting kinds of bats in the world than there are of people! Why, we come in 850 different species!

TRACY: What's a species?

KIM: What's a species? Why, it's a...a kind of a, you know, a sort of a ...it's a particular kind of a thing. You, for example, you're a Vespertilionidae - a little Brown Bat, for short. But you've got 849 kinds of cousins, each a little different, living all over the world! (The bats begin to gather 'round her.) Would you like to meet a few?

BATS: O.K. Yes! Sure!, etc.

KIM: Hmm...Who will I begin with? There are so many different kinds.

ROBIN: Tell us about one that you like.

KIM: One that I like?...O.K. I think I'll begin with the Butterfly Bat. (Bats enter as she describes them.)

Now in South-East Asia, 'round China and Japan,
Lives a tail-less little bat with a tiny wing-span,
She's the Butterfly Bat, make no mistake,
And she'd rather eat butterflies than caribou steak.

She doesn't use chopsticks, just her fine set of teeth,
She cleans herself afterwards because she is neat,
She's a lovely little species, no doubt about that,
But next I'll introduce you to the Fishing Bat.

I know a little fisherman, he's named the Mexican Bulldog Bat,
He lives in South America, that's why he wears a gaucho hat,
With sonar he detects the ripples made by heads and fins and that,
With his sharp claws he spears them, and that's what makes a fishing bat.

But I know another bat you're just dying to hear about. Everyone knows of him, everyone fears him. Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to introduce to you - the Vampire Bat! (He leaps out on stage.)

The Vampire Bat is a heavy-drinking bat,
He drinks blood to make himself fat,
He's got razor-sharp teeth that everyone fears,
He goes for the neck and the base of the ears.

He goes for his victims when they are asleep,
He's quite fond of cattle, of horses and sheep,
He's not fond of humans when he goes to dine,
But if cattle are scarce, they'll do just fine.

He makes a little cut, drinks his fill, flies away,
You see, he's the sort who must eat every day.
He lives in South America, this bat of great fame,
And he gives all the other bats his bad name!

But, the Queen of them all is the great Flying Fox,
She dines on fruit and nectar, not the farmers' flocks,
She doesn't use sonar, just gives her tongue a click,
She's got a 6-foot wing-span (oops!) 2 metres, metric.

It's far off Australia she calls her home,
And in India and Africa she's also known,
She's a clumsy flier with her great wings,
But it's not for us to criticize our queens and our kings.

The Flying Fox is truly the greatest of our race,
With her marvellous wing-span, her delicate tastes,
The humans in India consider her divine,
They wouldn't think of killing her, she's wined and she's dined.

Your Majesty...(Kim bows, kisses her hand. The Flying Fox exits, proudly.) What a bat! So there you have it! Don't you see!? You are a very noble breed of animal! You have royal relatives! Cunning hunters! Delicate dancers! I could have told you about hundreds of other kinds of bats, each with its own unique, interesting story! No one has the right to call you icky black bats! Why should they knock you down from your roosts when you're sleeping? Knock you down cruelly, out of the air, when all you're doing is eating the insects that bother them constantly? Brothers! Sisters! Are you going to take this hanging upside-down?

BATS: No!

KIM: Are you going to let them keep on destroying you for no good reason?

BATS: No!

KIM: Are you just ugly little blind animals that get tangled in people's hair?

BATS: No!

KIM: Then where's your pride? (Chant, alone, then with drumbeat and everyone joining in:)

Bats of the world, unite!

Bats of the world, unite!

We've been picked on much too long,

It's time to stand up and fight!

It's time to stand up and fight!

(They form into a line with Kim as their leader, and begin to march and sing as she plays "Be Kind to Your Web-Winged Friends.")

BE KIND TO YOUR WEB-WINGED FRIENDS

Be kind to your web-winged friends,

'Cause a bat might be somebody's mother,
Be kind to your friends from the caves,
'Cause they're small, but very brave;
You may think that this is the end,
But it's not, 'cause there is another ending,
'Cause we're through being tortured and killed,
And we will fight until the human beings respect us!

(At the end of the song, all turn to face Kim.)

KIM: Hip, hip..

(3 times)

ALL: Hooray!

JEFF: Well, this is all very well and good, but what are we going to do about it?

ROBIN: Do about it?

JEFF: Yeah. I mean, now we know we're part of a noble order of mammals, and everything, and we've agreed that the humans have no right to mistreat us. But how are we going to stop them?

KIM (IN DEEP THOUGHT): You've got a good point. A very good point. (Paces.) We've got to figure out some way to make the people of Mud Lake treat you right. But what can we do? Hmmm..

TRACY: We could go away.

KIM: Go away?

TRACY: Yes. We could leave Mud Lake. Just for awhile, you know, until they start to miss us.

ED: Hey! Yeah! With us gone, who will eat the insects?

ROBIN: Yeah! The mosquitoes and blackflies will drive them crazy.

JAMIE: Before too long, they'll be begging us to come back!

KIM: That just might do the trick! With all the bats gone, Mud Lake will have such an enormous insect population that the humans won't be able to go outdoors at all! And maybe then they'll start to appreciate us!

JEFF: What about the birds? They'll go on eating insects.

KIM: Sure they will. But there aren't enough birds around here to take over your job. You bats are necessary to this community. The humans may have to learn the hard way. Hmmm...Do you know of any good places you could fly away to for a couple of weeks? Places where no humans will bother you?

JAMIE: Well, there's Kenamu.

ROBIN: And Rabbit Island.

AMY: We could go to Travespine.

ED: Yeah, or the Burned Woods.

KIM: Excellent! What you'll have to do is split up into small groups and go to different places. You see, you may not find as many insects in those places because there aren't any people there to feed on. Mosquitoes will be in short supply. But as long as you're in small groups, you should find enough to keep you alive.

TRACY: But what about you?

ROBIN: Yeah, what are you gonna do?

KIM: Me? I'm going to stay right here in Mud Lake, and see what happens. If the humans want to negotiate, I'll negotiate with them. And once they've come to their senses, and promise to let you live in peace, I'll call you all back again. Listen. (Pull out ocarina.) When you hear this, it means the coast is clear and it's time to come home. (Play a melody.) Alright? Don't come back 'til you pick that up on your sonar. Now, then. You'll have to round up all the other bats and tell them the plan. You (Jamie) lead your group to Kenamu. You (Robin) take yours to Rabbit Island. You (Amy) take a group to Travespine, and you (Edward) head for the Burned Woods.

TRACY: Will you be alright here, by yourself?

KIM: I'll be fine. And I'll think of you all as the insect population grows. And let's hope the humans will, too! Now, off you go!

BATS: Bye! Good luck! See you!, etc.

(They go off stage to back of theatre. Kim huddles down in corner, her wings wrapped around her. Glenys comes out, as narrator.)

GLENYS: For three whole weeks there was not a bat to be seen in all of Mud Lake. At first, the people didn't notice it very much. They went on walking and bike-riding and canoeing and playing softball games, just as they had done before. But every day, the mosquitoes and blackflies multiplied. It got worse and worse. There were blackflies everywhere - whole clouds of them. They got in peoples' hair and noses and eyes. Everyone in Mud Lake was covered with fly bites. The children couldn't play softball anymore, and they had to give up riding their bikes. Soon they were spending all their time indoors - wasting their whole summer vacation. And it was then they began to miss the bats.

(As she says this, Mike and Tracy enter, covered with nets and heavy clothing. Kim sits up and listens. Glenys stands to one side.)

MIKE: I wish they'd come back.

TRACY: Who, Mike?

MIKE: The bats. Nothing's any good here, now. I mean, look at this (looks at his outfit). How can anyone do anything when they're dressed like this?

MOTHER: I know. But we're talking about my daughter's life here.

COREY: What life?

MOTHER: Corey.

COREY: Well, I think it's time you realized that Gizelle does have a life and she has to live it. If you keep treating her the way you are, you'll be really sorry.

MOTHER: Corey, do you think that it would be a good idea if I called Rob and asked him to come over for a talk?

COREY: So long as you talked to him and not at him. Listen, Mom, I gotta get to school, I'll see ya later.

(Corey leaves and Father enters.)

FATHER: Have you seen Gizelle yet today?

MOTHER: No, she left before I came down.

FATHER: Well, she'd better come home this evening. We have some things to settle.

MOTHER: Maybe we went a little too hard on her, Jim.

FATHER: Maybe we did over-react about the party. She did tell us it was Corey's. But I told her not to see Rob again and I meant it.

SCENE III

(Party at Jamie's house. All the gang is there, including Gizelle, Rob and Corey.)

JAMIE: I wish that new guy would hurry up and get here. (Notices that Gizelle isn't saying much.) Sorry about last night, Gizelle, but I didn't want to get caught in the middle of a family scene.

GIZELLE: It's O.K. I'm glad you left. I don't want you involved in this.

COREY: Hey, come on you guys. This is supposed to be a party, not a funeral.

ROB: What's with your parents, anyway. Is it me or what?

GIZELLE: No, you have nothing to do with it and I don't want to talk about it anymore.

(The door rings and Corey goes to answer it. It is Corey's father.)

COREY: Dad, what are you doing here?

FATHER: Never mind that, Corey. Gizelle, what are you doing here...with him? I thought I told you...

COREY: Just stop it. You're only making it worse.

bats will leave Mud Lake and never return again. (To Mike.) Well, what do you think?

MIKE: Sounds good to me!

KIM: Well, you'd better start collecting your signatures. I'll wait right right here.

TRACY: C'mon, Mike.

(They exit.)

GLENYS: And that's just what Tracy and Mike did. They went from house to house, and they got all the children in Mud Lake to sign the petition. They didn't take very long, either. They must have been pretty anxious to get rid of some of the flies.

(Tracy and Mike come running back, panting, with the scroll and another rolled up paper. They handed the scroll to Kim.)

TRACY: Well, here it is. Everyone signed it. And now, could you please call the bats back? Summer is almost over!

KIM (INSPECTING IT): Hmmmm...Everything looks like it's in order. You can go back to your houses now. The bats will be back in no time. And in a couple of days, your blackfly situation should be under control again.

MIKE: Wait! We made something for the bats.

TRACY: It's to show them we're sorry we've been so cruel.

(They open a big poster reading "Welcome Home, Bats" and they tape it on back wall.)

TRACY AND MIKE: See you later! (They run off stage.)

KIM (WHEN THEY'RE GONE): It worked! Yipee! If only they'll keep their promise...

(She plays melody on ocarina again, and from back of theatre, bats come up aisles and return to stage, thronging silently around Kim, pantomiming, talking and looking at sign.)

GLENYS (AS BATS GO TO REAR OF STAGE, AND MUD LAKERS COME BACK OUT WITH BASEBALL BATS): And so, for the rest of the summer, the bats and the Mud Lakers lived side by side in peace. The children didn't think about killing bats anymore, 'cause they thought of them as their friends. How do I know? 'Cause I was one of them!

(She runs to join others and they resume a baseball game, same positions as before, Tracy at bat.)

MIKE (AS CATCHER): Strike one! Strike two!

(Tracy hits ball, runs to first base. The bats all cheer.)

JAMIE (TO BATS): We're almost done, guys. Then you can have a good old feed!

VIRGINIA (AS BATS COME FORWARD TO JOIN MUD LAKERS): There's just nothing like a Mud Lake Softball Game!

(Finish with a chorus from song, "Mud Lake Softball Game".)

THE END